

3707  
A  
D E F E N C E  
OF THE  
C L E R G Y  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND;  
IN A  
L E T T E R  
TO THE  
REV. WILLIAM JESSE,  
RECTOR OF DOWLES;  
OCCASIONED BY HIS  
P A R O C H I A L I A.

"THE Success of Ministers in the Discharge of their Duty, depends greatly upon the Esteem and good Opinion of their People; and they, who go about to represent the Parochial Clergy as *unable or unwilling* to teach their People *aright*, are so far *answerable* for defeating the good Effects that their Ministry might otherwise have."

BISHOP GIBSON'S FOURTH PASTORAL LETTER.

G L O C E S T E R:  
PRINTED BY R. RAIKES,  
FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY  
J. F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,  
AND R. BALDWIN, PATER-NOSTER-ROW, LONDON;  
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SMART, WOLVERHAMPTON; HUGHES, DUDLEY.

M.DCC.LXXXVI.





E R R A T A.

Page 26, Line 13, for *in*, read *on* your second Quotation.

——— Line 23, for *in*, read *on* the Moral Fact.

Page 44, Line 13, change the Place of the Interrogation  
Point, and read, What were these  
Sayings? — His *Moral* Sayings.

Page 63, Line 9, strike out *chiefly*.

A. R. A. T. A.

Page 58, Line 13, (a) read as your second Question  
and as, for as, read as the M. and P. B.  
Page 58, Line 14, Place of the investigation  
Point, and read, What were their  
arrangements with the above persons?  
Page 58, Line 15, (a) read as (b).

4 OC 58

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A  
D E F E N C E  
O F T H E  
C L E R G Y,  
O F T H E  
C H U R C H O F E N G L A N D.

*Reverend Sir,*

A WORTHY and a *discreet* Man seldom speaks Evil of a single Individual unnecessarily; a *worthy* Man never falsely, without feeling a Pang which they can best conceive who have a quick Sense of Honour and of Duty. What then, Sir, must you feel, who have reflected, not only unnecessarily, but falsely, upon a whole Body of Men, and those the Teachers of Religion?---That the Clergy have not Sagacity, or if Sagacity, not Honesty enough to *preach the*

B

*Gospel*



*Gospel as they ought*;---that, in Consequence of this, they are the Cause of the extreme Ignorance and Profligacy of Manners in the People;---that they are looked upon as a useless Set of Men, and a dead Weight upon the Community\*;—are some of the kind Compliments you pay us. And in saying this, you “have done no more,” you tell us, “than relate a plain Matter of Fact.” If it is so, I entirely agree with you, that howmuchsoever to the Discredit of our own Order, it is Time the World should be acquainted with it, and great are the Obligations in which Society stands indebted to Mr. JESSE. But if, upon Enquiry, it should prove a mere Fancy,—great must be the Humiliation of our *inconsiderate Accuser*.

As the Advancement of Religion is not unconnected with the Character of its

\* JESSE's *Sermon*, p. 18, 19, and *Parochialia*, p. 3.

Teachers,

Teachers, and as some Parts of *Parochialia*, no less than the original Assertion which occasioned my first Letter, have a Tendency to obscure and misrepresent the *Gospel itself*; I shall take the Liberty to examine, whether the Charge you so confidently urge against us, is, as you say, *a plain Matter of Fact*, or whether it is nothing more than the baseless Fabrick of your own Imagination.

I confess, I am not a little surprized to find the Subject of Discussion between us confounded, in your Publication, with an entire new Subject.—Whether you chose this Method as a good one to conceal the Weakness of your Cause; or for Reasons best known to yourself; or for no Reason, and not perceiving the obvious Advantage of treating the Subjects separately; I will not determine. But as your Design in remarking upon CLERICUS was to defend your first Assertion, I conceive you were likely to

accomplish this Design more effectually, by keeping your own Attention, and that of your Readers, fixt on this single Object, than by dividing it among those numerous “ Defects and Errors pointed “ out,” and those wondrous “ Improve- “ ments suggested and recommended,” which your pompous Title-Page has promised us. When I first saw this Title-Page, I expected, as I well might, to find CLERICUS dispatched, in a summary Way, either in a Preface, or a Postscript; and that the Body of the Book would be reserved for *Parochialia*, or your important “ Observations on the Discharge of Parochial Duties:” and the very first Sentence of your Preface confirmed me in the Opinion that you would deign to take but little Notice of CLERICUS. “ The Letter of CLERICUS “ would have been unnoticed by me, if “ I had not” [very ingeniously] “ conceived the Idea of making it an Occa- “ sion” [for it was impossible I could find any other Occasion] “ to speak my “ Mind



“ Mind freely on Subjects of *general*  
“ Concernment, and those indeed of  
“ the greatest Importance to us all.”—  
And yet, whoever shall take the Trouble of wading through your seventeen Letters, will find that your Remarks on CLERICUS employ by far the greater Part of them; and that (if these Remarks, together with your abundant and prolix Quotations, were deducted) the “ Defects and Errors pointed out, and “ the Improvements suggested,” would, when discovered, lie very conveniently in the Compass of a Nut-Shell.—The Observations on Parochial Duties, we naturally suppose, will be the *main* Subject; but we soon find the Tables are turned, and CLERICUS is the Burden of the Song.

I am far from desiring, that Observations of such “ general Concernment,  
“ and of the greatest Importance to us all,  
“ should be lost to the Public;” but at  
the

the same Time I cannot help wishing, that, for the more certain Advancement of Religion, they had been reserved for a separate Publication; or, at least, that you had not so unhappily huddled together and intermingled your Observations on Parochial Duties with your Remarks on CLERICUS. No one good Reason can be assigned why they should be thus confounded; why they should not, is sufficiently obvious to every one.

BUT as you have thought proper to puzzle and perplex your Readers, and to blend together Subjects which ought to have been kept distinct, it becomes absolutely necessary (and indeed it would otherwise be very useful) to state in the fairest possible Terms, that is, in your own Words,—the Subject of Dispute between us. Your Assertions now are,\*

\* *Parochiala*, p. 20.

First,

First, "That we, (the Clergy) have  
"sighted Revelation itself;" and are  
*Infidels*.

Secondly, "The great Object of Re-  
"velation;" and are *Hereticks*.†

## THESE

† Mr. JESSE either *will not*, or *cannot*, express himself clearly, even where it is so absolutely necessary as in stating a Question: He is an honest Man, and therefore he *would* write intelligibly if he *could*. His twofold Charge is not without Obscurity. For if "we have sighted" (in whatever sense he may use the word) "Revelation itself:" it is unnecessary to add "we have sighted the great Object of it;" as the Whole is supposed to comprehend all its Parts. And if by *sighted* he means, what, by the Help of numberless Passages, I have understood him to mean; then one of his Propositions destroys the other. For if we are *Infidels*, we cannot be *Hereticks* (Heresy implying a Belief in the Gospel Revelation); and if we are *Hereticks*, we cannot be *Infidels*.

I could wish to have seen after the Word *sight* something explanatory; for in this Place, and by itself, it is a slippery Sort of Word; however, we must take Things as we find them, and make Mr. J. his own Interpreter: Nothing can be fairer than this.

HE



THESE are Assertions which I believe no Clergyman of the Church of

HE quotes Archbishop SECKER, as saying, "That many, if not *most* of us, have dwelt too little on those Doctrines in our Sermons," [that is the Doctrines of Christianity] "by no Means in general from disbelieving or slighting them"—Yes, says Mr. J. "The Silence he speaks of, &c.—is in a great Measure owing to *Unbelief*." [*Paro.* p. 35.] When CLERICUS asserted in his first Letter, that the Clergy universally make the great Articles of our Belief, the Subjects of their Sermons, not only at stated Times, but *very frequently* besides.—"Explain them all away, (says Mr. J.) *join the Infidel in deriding them,*" [*Parochialia*, p. 11.] "Inculcate the soothing Doctrines of *Natural Religion*." If so, it must be owing to *Unbelief*. In his Preface, he says, "You will observe that the Doctrine of *the Atonement*, is the great Object of my Zeal;" [I fancy his Readers if they had not been told this would not have expected it, either in *Remarks on CLERICUS*, or in *Observations on Parochial Duties* ;] and in the first Letter, p. 12. he cites these Words from an old Author, "Now have we tried your Spirits, that they bee not of God, for you denye Christ." Many other Passages in his Letters are to the same Purpose.

IT was necessary to add this Note, in Order to lay a sure Foundation at setting off, and to give my Reasons

of *England* will read without Indignation and Astonishment; and yet we shall presently see, that you have contrived to aggravate even this Charge,

Reasons for the Construction I have put on Mr. J.'s Words. *Herefy* and *Infidelity* seem uppermost in his Thoughts. In Consequence of this, he has brought a twofold Charge against us; and thrown together a Number of Quotations, which he leaves to take their Chance, and to prove *either* of his Assertions, or *both*, or *neither*, according to the Fancy or Judgment of his Readers. If this two-fold Charge may be reduced to one, why is it two-fold? If distinct Charges, why not treat them separately, as is usual in such Cases; and as every Man, but himself, would have done. But he pursues a Method of his own; and, perhaps, it may have its Advantage:—His Readers, confused by such a Multiplicity of Quotations, may give him Credit for having proved, what he neither has proved, nor can prove.

The Character given of Dryden, as a Prose-Writer, is well worth every Clergyman's Consideration. "*He always understands himself,*" (a Case not so common with Preachers and even Authors of all Sorts, as is generally imagined) "*and his Readers always understand him.*" JOHNSON'S Lives of the Poets.

C

which,

which, one would have thought, could scarce admit of Aggravation.

IT will be proper to trace the Steps by which Mr. J. was led to these two strange Assertions. In his Sermon preached at *Bewdley*, which occasioned the Strictures of CLERICUS, Mr. J. besides expressing himself much dissatisfied with our Clergy and their Preaching, asserted, "That *Sermons* were dwindled away into *Moral Essays*."

THERE were Reasons, considering from what Quarters these Censures came, to call for an Explanation. As a Variety of Opinions might be drawn from Language so vague and ambiguous, CLERICUS gave the most candid and favourable Interpretation; and only supposed, that Mr. J. had expressed too much Partiality for *Faith* and too little for *Morality*. He had ventured, with great Sincerity, and without the least Suspicion of being mistaken, to declare, that Mr. J. could not possibly mean,



mean, the Clergy preached Nothing *but* *Morality*, or *Morality exclusive of Christianity*, and in *Disbelief of it*; and he added, “ For you might with equal Truth have  
 “ said the Clergy believe and preach Ma-  
 “ hometanism.” Yet this Proposition, which CLERICUS thought it was absolutely impossible Mr. J. could mean, is the very Proposition which he now maintains against us. In his first Letter he insinuates, that the Clergy are *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, and in the Conclusion of it says, “ In my  
 “ next Letter you shall have something  
 “ more particular of these Preachers of  
 “ modern Christianity;” In the second, he begins, “ You complain that I was  
 “ not explicit enough in my Charity Ser-  
 “ mon: I shall therefore be more par-  
 “ ticular; and will tell you plainly what  
 “ that something is, which I judged to  
 “ be wanting in the Compositions of the  
 “ Clergy. You are not disposed to put  
 “ the best Construction on my Words:  
 “ I shall therefore express my Sentiments  
 “ by Quotations from approved Authors.

“ The Quotations, which I shall produce,  
 “ exhibit this two-fold Charge against us;  
 “ First, We have slighted Revelation it-  
 “ self; and Secondly, the great Object of  
 “ Revelation.” Here then we have what  
 that something is, which Mr. J. judges  
 to be wanting in the Sermons of our  
 Clergy, and his own Explanation of his  
 own Words. Had I given such an Ex-  
 planation, he might well have said, “ You  
 “ are not disposed to put the best Con-  
 “ struction on my Words.” But can he  
 be perfectly *Compos* when he says, “ I  
 “ hope, Sir, you will think the very  
 “ slight and accidental Touch of Censure,  
 “ in my Discourse preached in *Bewdley*  
 “ Chapel, was not so severe and unjust as  
 “ you at first imagined it to be.”\* Very  
 slight indeed, Sir, is the Charge of *Infi-*  
*delity* and *Herefy*; and to be sure there can  
 be no Severity in it; and not even the  
 Shadow of Injustice.†

IT

\* *Parochialia.* P. 77.

† This singularly inconsistent Gentleman can say too,  
 P. 3. “ There was not any Thing further from my In-  
 “ tention,

It is by no Means my Intention to reply to the Whole of your seventeen Letters, or to examine each of the numerous Quotations, which, as Auxiliaries, you have brought into the Field on this Occasion. Indeed a better General than yourself would have made a more skillful and judicious Disposition of his Troops; and drawn them up to much greater Advantage. But, as I am no otherwise contending for Victory than in the Cause of Truth, I will separate those of your Allies, which can contribute most to your Service; and will generously place them, where they may act with better Effect, than as you have left them, confused and crouded together, under all the Disadvantages of an Eastern Army. To drop the Metaphor,

“tention, than to give Offence to *any* of my Brethren, “the Clergy.” And when he is accused of having brought a Charge against the whole Body of the Clergy, he can forget himself, and exclaim, “O Lord, my God! if I have done any such Thing,” &c. p. 2. And, if you have not, Mr. J.’s Language has lost its Meaning.

Sir,



Sir, I shall select those Passages from your Letters, which seem most to your Purpose; and those, which I shall pass over, are such as I deem too insignificant to require particular Attention. I shall not decline, I assure you, the Examination of any Passage, because I think it unanswerable;—I would ingenuously acknowledge it:—I shall not shrink from the Discussion of the Question, but meet it fairly; and, I declare, so averse am I to any Thing disingenuous in Controversy, that I hold it, not only dishonourable, unbecoming a Man, a Christian, and a Lover of Truth, but absolutely criminal, to conceal our Difficulties in the Examination of any Subject connected with Morality and Religion. It is throwing an Obstacle in the Way of Truth, and retarding its Progress: The Investigation of religious Truth is one of the first Duties of a rational Creature, and the most ardent Love of it, should be excited and encouraged as much as possible. For “*It cannot be gotten for*  
“ *Gold*

“ Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed  
 “ for the Price thereof. It cannot be  
 “ valued with the Gold of Ophir, with  
 “ the precious Onyx, or the Sapphire.  
 “ No mention shall be made of Coral, or  
 “ of Pearls. The Topaz of Ethiopia  
 “ shall not equal it.\*

AND now, Sir, after this Encomium  
 on Truth, and this Account of the Can-  
 dour and fair Dealing you may expect  
 from me, I proceed to the Examination  
 of what you have adduced in Support of  
 your Assertions, “ That the Clergy have  
 “ slighted Revelation itself, and the  
 “ great Object of Revelation; and that  
 “ Sermons are dwindled away into mo-  
 “ ral Essays.” For as your two-fold  
 Charge (which you attempt to prove by  
 the same identical Quotations) is an Ex-  
 planation of your first Assertion, I must,  
 however unwillingly, follow your Ex-  
 ample, consider them all together, and  
 adopt, for once, the *new Fashion*, which

\* Job. 28 C.

you have introduced into Disquisitions of this Nature.

MR. KNOX, who stands first upon the List, says, “ I will take the Liberty to  
“ hint to young and fashionable Divines,  
“ who are in general smitten with the  
“ false Graces of Style and Delivery,  
“ that their Congregations would be  
“ more edified, if, instead of MORAL  
“ ESSAYS, in what they call *fine Lan-*  
“ *guage*, they would preach Sermons,  
“ properly so called, in the plain Style  
“ of Truth and Scripture. Let them  
“ also take Care, as they will answer it  
“ to HIM, in whose Name they ascend  
“ the Pulpit, not to preach themselves,  
“ but the Gospel.”

THUS far only does Mr. JESSE's Quo-  
tation go; but as a few more Words con-  
clude this Essay, and may perhaps help  
us to form some Conjecture of Mr.  
KNOX's Meaning, I shall add the rest.  
After the Words, “ not to preach them-  
“ selves



“ selves, but the Gospel.”—It follows,  
 “ Not to be so solicitous, in the Dis-  
 “ play of a white Hand, as of a pure  
 “ Heart; of a Diamond Ring, as of a  
 “ shining Example\*.”

Now, if we compare the Title of this Essay, which is, “ On the Inefficacy of  
 “ that Style of speaking and writing,  
 “ which may be called *Frothy*,” and examine its Contents, it conveys, I guess, a very different Meaning from what you imagine, and only shews (what is pretty well known to be true, and probably ever will be the Case) that the Sermons of such *ecclesiastical Macaronies*, as are here described, are, for the most Part, flimsy and superficial.

INDEED he has, like yourself, made Use of the Words, *Moral Essays*; but the Hint, you may observe, is confined to *young* and *fashionable Divines* only. What particular Meaning, or whether

\* 133 *Essay*, vol. II.

any precise and determinate Meaning was affixed by Mr. K. to these Words, *Moral Essays*, at the Time of writing, is more than I will take upon me to assert: But the Character of Mr. K. and numberless Passages in his Essays, and several in this very Essay, preclude our supposing he means to affirm, that Morality has no Connexion with the Gospel; and if we should allow that he has the same Meaning with yourself, that our young Divines preach only on the *Moral Parts* of our Religion (I hope he will pardon my Supposition) it may be answered, that young Clergymen are often known to insist on any Topic of our Religion, that is thought brilliant, or capable of the pathetic; and, far from confining themselves to *Moral Essays*, are more frequently remarked for producing a weak and injudicious Defence of Christianity, or for thundering out declamatory Invectives against modern *Infidels*\*.

YOUR

\* “ AND here I am at a Loss what to say upon the  
 “ frequent Custom of preaching against *Atheism*, *Deism*,  
 “ *Free-*

YOUR next Quotation is from another of these Essays; though, no Doubt, “ to  
 “ save your Readers the Trouble of a  
 “ Search,” you have, as before, given  
 no Reference either to Page, or Essay.

“ A general Complaint has been made,  
 “ that SERMONS have become in these  
 “ Days merely MORAL ESSAYS. There  
 “ was a Time, when a Passage from  
 “ Scripture, well introduced, was esteem-  
 “ ed a Flower of Speech, far surpassing  
 “ every Ornament of Rhetoric. It is  
 “ now avoided as an ugly Patch, that  
 “ chequers with Deformity the glossy  
 “ Contexture\*.”

THE Words, “ glossy Contexture,”  
 like the *fine Language* in the first Ex-  
 tract, lead me to imagine, that *young*  
 and *fashionable Divines* were still in Mr.  
 KNOX’s Thoughts. There seems also a

“ *Free-thinking*, and the like, as *young Divines* are par-  
 “ ticularly fond of doing.” — SWIFT’s *Letter to a young*  
*Clergyman*.

\* *Essay* 168, Vol. 2.



confused Idea about quoting Scripture. If Mr. K. has found out the precise Number of Passages from Scripture necessary to constitute a *Sermon*, in Contradistinction to a *Moral Essay*, it was unkind in him not to oblige the Clergy with so important a Discovery. Yet I fancy Mr. K. will not rest his Distinction on so weak a Foundation as this : He knows better.

BUT if he means by the Words *merely Moral Essays*, that the Clergy are now become *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, and preach *Morality exclusive* of Christianity (which is allowing every Thing you could wish) and that this is made a general Complaint, we shall in the first Place question, whether any such general Complaint *has* been made. But admitting, for the Sake of Argument, that a general Complaint has been made, we may safely affirm, that it is a Complaint without Reason. If it is not without Reason, and has a good Foundation, we call upon Mr. K. and  
Mr. J.

Mr. J. for their Proofs. The only Proofs in this Case must be drawn from the printed Sermons of our Clergy, and from the Tenor of those Manuscript Sermons, which for some Time past have been, or now are, preached. To these printed Sermons we most confidently appeal, and we defy Mr. K. or Mr. J. to make good this hasty and ill-founded Censure. These Sermons are open to every one; and the Writers of them will be found in general to pursue exactly the same Line with their orthodox Predecessors; and to inculcate the two main Principles of the Gospel, *Christian Faith* and *Christian Morality*.—As to the Sermons, which are now generally preached by the Clergy, and not in Print, it is in the Recollection of every Attendant on Divine Service, whether *Christianity is excluded*; and, with the Confidence of conscious Integrity, we leave it entirely with our Audience to determine for themselves; to pronounce on the Fidelity of our clerical Conduct; and to pass Sentence upon us,

us, either of Condemnation or Acquittal, as to themselves shall seem just and meet.

If then Mr. K. has *not* the same Meaning with yourself (which is most likely) the Quotation of these Passages is nothing to your Purpose : If he has, you have already seen the Answer.

The last Quotation from Mr. K. is as follows :

“ A professed Christian Preacher,  
 “ addressing a professed Christian Audience, should remember, that, however beautiful his Discourse, if it is  
 “ no more than a *Moral Discourse*, he  
 “ may preach it, and they may hear  
 “ it, and both continue unconverted  
 “ Heathens.”

I have considered this Paragraph again and again ; have tried every Method of Analysis upon it, and still the Result is,—not what might be expected



pected from Mr. K.—I think there are but two Senses, in which the Words a professed Christian Preacher, and a professed Christian Audience, can be understood; either as signifying a Preacher who is a *real* Christian, and an Audience of *real* Christians; or as meaning a Preacher and an Audience who are *nominal* Christians; Christians only in Profession and Appearance, not in Reality and in Heart. If the latter be the Sense, and he means Christians in Profession only and not in Heart, that is *unconverted*, it amounts to this; that if a Moral Discourse is preached by one Heathen and heard by other Heathens, they will, Preacher and Audience, both continue unconverted Heathens, which I suppose nobody will or can deny: but it required no great Conjunction to discover this; certainly not the very respectable Abilities of our ingenious and agreeable Essayist.—If the former be the Sense, what is then the Amount of this marvellous Passage?—that a real Christian

Christian preaching a Moral Discourse, and an Audience of real Christians hearing it, they will be Christians and no Christians, converted and unconverted at the same Time: For if by a professed Christian Preacher and a professed Christian Audience, be meant *real Christians*, how can they both continue *unconverted Heathens*?

THE short Answer to these three Quotations from Mr. K. is this. They will not bear Examination. Mr. K. has not been careful to form in his own Mind *clear* and *distinct* Ideas, when he wrote the Words *Moral Essays*; and therefore he could convey no clear and distinct Ideas to his Readers\*. For my own  
Part

\* That a Man of Mr. KNOX's Talents [for his Genius, his Taste in polite Literature, and his Erudition are unquestionable] should sometimes have expressed himself carelessly, is not to be wondered at; especially considering the great Variety of Matter in his Essays. If the Passages themselves are not, in your Opinion, a sufficient Proof of Inaccuracy, you shall

Part, I entirely acquit him of entertaining so absurd a Notion as you are disposed to father upon him, and believe

shall have unanswerable Proof from another of his Essays. [10. 1 Vol.] He describes a Clergyman thus: One who "receives a legal Commission from the ecclesiastical Superior to pray aloud in an Assembly, or to read a *Moral Discourse* in it."—Oh fie! Mr. K. What!—by the very Terms of our Commission, are we to preach like *young and fashionable Divines*! Well may a general Complaint [should we call it] be made, that Sermons are become in these Days, *merely Moral Essays*.—Surely it was not a little inconsiderate in Mr. K. to describe that as our Duty in one Essay, which in another, he complains of as our Fault. How easy is it to censure others, and even for our own Mistakes, Mr. JESSE!

With Respect to Mr. J. in one Thing, however, he is right; "You have read," he says, "Mr. KNOX's Essays; then it was not the first Time when you read my Discourse, that you have seen something *in Print and in a Way of Censure too*, on the Moral Essays of the Clergy."—True, I had, but as such Passages conveyed no clear Ideas, they left no Impression on my Mind. "He that uses his Words loosely and unsteadily, will either not be minded, or not understood."\*

\* LOCKE.

E

that



that nothing could be further from his Intentions, than to accuse the Clergy of being Infidels and Hereticks, or of preaching Morality, in Exclusion and Disbelief of Christianity. But, if you think otherwise, and conceive him to be an Auxiliary, I refer you to what has already been said, which proves, in a Manner satisfactory, I believe, to every impartial Person, that the Opinion is erroneous, and entirely void of Foundation, and has received, in what has been advanced in your second Quotation, a full and sufficient Confutation.

AFTER these Extracts, I am charged [p. 7.] with saying, a *good Sermon* and a *Moral Essay* are the same Thing; “ the Difference is only in the Name.” I refer you to my Letter for the Correction of this Mistake. There you will find a Restriction clearly pointed out. I do not much object to your calling Sermons, in the *Moral Part* of our Religion, *Moral Essays*; but should you be inclined

inclined to call our Sermons, on the *Articles of Faith, Moral Essays*, I expressly mention, you will be most egregiously mistaken.—The Difference, therefore, is only in the Name, *when we preach on the Morality of the Gospel*; and you are told [p. 22.] that our *Moral Essays* (if you will have them so) may always be called *Sermons*; but our *Sermons* cannot always be called *Moral Essays*.

IN a fruitless Attempt to explain the Difference between a Moral Essay and a Sermon, you say [p. 8.] “ The Term, “ *Essay*, is commonly used to denote “ any short Treatise on any Subject; “ and a *Moral Essay* is such a Treatise “ on social Duties.” Now taking your own Definition of Moral Essays, let us apply them to your own Words, “ Sermons are dwindled into Moral Essays,” i. e. into Treatises on the Duties we owe to our Neighbour. Not content with accusing us of Infidelity, with preaching nothing but Morality, you take the

E 2

Word,

Word, Morality, in its most confined Sense, as signifying our Duty to our Neighbour only, instead of that greater Latitude of Signification, in which it is often used, as containing our Duty not only to our Neighbour, but to ourselves, and to God. You have here narrowed your Foundation without any Necessity, and only increased your own Difficulties: For do the Clergy never preach on the Duty we owe to God on Trust, Affiance, Resignation, &c.—never on the Duty we owe *ourselves*,—on Temperance, &c.—Is this *indeed* the Case?—Is this *really* the Fault of the Clergy; or is the Fault in the Confusion of your own Ideas?—The Answer need not be given; it is too obvious.

AND yet, no farther off than P. 11. we have a different Account. You say,  
 “ I would call those Discourses *moral*, in  
 “ Opposition to the Word *evangelical*, in  
 “ which the grand Peculiarities of the  
 “ Gospel are omitted, or the absolute  
 “ Importance



“ Importance of them kept out of  
 “ Sight\*.” So unsettled are your No-  
 tions, that you do not fix the same Mean-  
 ing to the same Words for three Pages  
 together. What you may intend in this  
 doubtful Passage, I shall not stay to en-  
 quire, but recommend to your attentive  
 Consideration, a Quotation or two from  
 LOCKE†.

WHAT

\* I must here, as in my first Letter, beg Leave to ask a  
 Question, to which you have not favoured me with an  
 Answer. What is your *own* Discourse? Is it a *Moral*  
*Essay*, or not? If it is, why do you preach yourself,  
 what you condemn in others? If it is not, wherein con-  
 sisteth the Difference between your Discourse and such a  
 Moral Essay as the Clergy often preach.—Draw the  
 Line if you can.

IF we examine it by the above Definition of a Moral  
 Discourse, are not the grand Peculiarities of the Gospel  
 omitted, and the absolute Importance of them kept out  
 of Sight? Yet what Man in his Senses would suppose that  
 Mr. J. slighted Revelation, or the great Object of Re-  
 velation.

*Quam temere in nosmet Legem sancimus iniquam.*

† OTHERS — familiarly use Words, which the Pro-  
 priety of Language has affixed to very important *Ideas*,  
*without any distinct Meaning* at all. *Wisdom, Glory, Grace,*  
*&c.* (and may we not particularly mention *Faith* and  
*Morality*)

WHAT follows, is, I must say, very intelligible and very extraordinary. It will be necessary to produce the Passage to which it is given in Reply.

‘ As Christianity consists of *Articles* of  
 ‘ *Faith*, or what we are to believe; and of  
 ‘ *Moral Precepts*, or what we are to prac-  
 ‘ tice; the Clergy, as they ought, some-  
 ‘ times explain the Articles of Faith, some-  
 ‘ times the Moral Precepts. The latter,

*Morality*) are Words frequent enough in every Man’s Mouth; but if a great many of those who use them, should be asked what they mean by them, they would be at a stand, and not know what to answer.—*Essay on Human Understanding*. C. 10. S. 3.

MEN take the Words they find in Use among their Neighbours; and that they may not seem ignorant what they stand for, use them confidently, without much troubling their Heads about a *certain fixed Meaning*: whereby, besides the Ease of it, they obtain this Advantage, that as in such Discourses they seldom are in *the Right*, so they are as seldom to be convinced they are in *the Wrong*; it being all one to go about to draw those Men out of their Mistakes, who have no settled Notions, as to dispossess a Vagrant of his Habitation, who has no settled Abode.—*Ibid.* S. 4.

‘ perhaps,

‘ perhaps, are the more general Topics;  
 ‘ but *very frequently*, and especially about  
 ‘ *Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide*, they  
 ‘ (I believe I may say) universally make  
 ‘ the great Articles of our Faith or Belief,  
 ‘ such as *the Death of Christ, the Resur-*  
 ‘ *rection, Divine Grace, &c.* the Subject  
 ‘ of their Sermons.\*’

IN this Passage, CLERICUS has asserted, that *very frequently*, as well as at

\* I must take Notice what delectable Nonsense Mr. J. has made of the above Extract as given by himself [P. 11.] “ You may frequently mention his Name, and especially “ about *Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, preach about* “ the Death of CHRIST, Resurrection, Divine Grace.” The Words *preach about* the Death of CHRIST, &c. are his own, and give him an Opportunity of being exceedingly witty — on himself, in adding, Yes, Sir, *about it* and *about it*, and never come to the Point. However I entirely acquit Mr. J. of any intentional Misquotation. I know both his Heart and his Heedlessness too well. But he is so fond of the Mistake, that he goes on with an additional Improvement, P. 29. “ Surely Sir, it will “ not be a sufficient Justification of themselves, to say, “ that about *Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide*, they have “ preached *something about* the Death of CHRIST, the “ Resurrection, Divine Grace.”

certain



certain stated Seasons, the Clergy universally make the great Articles of our Faith the Subject of their Sermons. If so, Mr. J. is sufficiently aware, it cannot, with the least Truth, be affirmed, “ that their Sermons are dwindled into “ *Moral Essays.*” It cannot be denied, that the Clergy often preach on Faith. He cannot have the Effrontery to deny, what is so unquestionably known by every Churchman. What then is to be done? It must be *evaded*: The Attempt is bold; but what cannot *extraordinary* Abilities achieve?—He says, therefore, [p. 11.] “ You may sometimes make the great Articles of our “ Belief the Subjects of Discourse, and, “ alas!—*explain them all away.* Instead “ of insisting on them, you may *join* “ *the Infidel in deriding them,* as the enthusiastic Notions of a certain Description of Men. You may represent them in such a meretricious “ Dress, that they shall lose all Appearance of their divine Original; and “ under

“ under the Terms and Phrases of In-  
 “ spiration, inculcate the soothing Doc-  
 “ trines of what is termed, *Natural Re-*  
 “ *ligion.*” And then he applies to us a  
 very civil Passage, “ Now have we  
 “ tryed your Spirits, that they bee not of  
 “ GOD, for you *denye* CHRIST,” &c.

THE Clergy, like their Predecessors,  
 preach frequently on the great Articles  
 of our Faith, as every one in every Con-  
 gregation can testify. But Mr. J. taking  
 a very *short Method* with them, boldly  
 exclaims,—“ And, alas, explain them all  
 “ away.” This is somewhat like Lord  
 PETER’s plain Argument. To compleat  
 the Modesty of your Conduct, you should  
 have added too the Anathema against all  
 those, who “ offer to believe other-  
 wise,” or to doubt what you say. “ In-  
 “ stead of insisting on them, you may  
 “ join the Infidel in deriding *them*.”  
 Very easily said, Sir, if a Man can once  
 persuade himself, that he need not pre-  
 serve the most distant Appearance

F

of

of Probability in his Assertions, which is exactly the Case here. What, Sir, the Clergy, when they make the great Articles of our Belief the Subjects of Discourse, instead of insisting on them, join the Infidel in deriding them!—Was not the Accusation of our being *Infidels* abundantly sufficient, without aggravating this base Charge with the Addition, that we *join the Infidel in deriding* that Faith, which we preach?—Could not the Absurdity, the absolute Incredibility of such a Charge, restrain you?—Deride! What, Sir? the very Subjects they are preaching upon? (for of their *Preaching* we speak).—Deride them?—Where?—In the Pulpit, sacred to Sincerity and Truth:—In the Place of Divine Worship.—In the Sanctuary of God.—Unexampled Accusation!—To what can we impute it?—To more than Folly; to a momentary Delirium.—Is there a Clergyman upon Earth, who, if base enough to think these Things, has Audacity enough



enough to preach them?—Who could dare to insult the meanest Congregation in this Manner?—Who could make the most distant Approaches to such a Conduct, and hold up to Derision and Ridicule, the Religion of that God, in whose Temple, and in whose awful Presence, he is speaking?—That the Clergy\* in general now preach, as their

F 2

Prede-

\* WHEN I first read the Passages just quoted, “ You may explain away,”—“ You may join the Infidel in deriding them, &c.”—I thought he meant only CLERICUS in particular; for the Word *You*, is of ambiguous Purport in this Place: It may signify you the Clergy, or you CLERICUS. And I did not conceive, that even Mr. J. could forget himself so much, as to assert such Things of our Clergy in general. But I did not at the same Time recollect, how close a Reasoner is Mr. J.; and that, when it was maintained, that the Clergy in general preach frequently on the Articles of Faith, he would never think it a sufficient Answer to say, or insinuate, that CLERICUS in particular was an *Infidel*, or *Heretick*; because, whether he really is either the one or the other, or, if possible, as Orthodox as Mr. J. himself, proves nothing in the present Argument. That *the Clergy in general* very frequently, as well as at stated Times, preach on the Articles of the

Christian

Predecessors in general did formerly, is an unquestionable Fact, which there is no getting rid of; but which, instead of acknowledging, as you ought to have done, you endeavour to evade. Yet, if you had not Greatness of Mind, and Manliness of Character, to confess your first Mistake ingenuously, Silence would better have become you, than having Recourse to so groundless a Charge, so unparalleled a Misrepresentation.

BUT allow me to ask, Where, Sir, are these Clergymen to be found?—  
 “Not such,” you say, “as have crept  
 “in unawares, few in Number, and  
 “therefore little Harm to be dreaded  
 “from them; but who” [O tremendous  
 Invasion!] “have poured in upon us, as  
 “the *Germans* into *Gaul*, in the Time

Christian Faith (and therefore their Sermons cannot be Moral Essays) is the Assertion maintained, and is what Mr. J. should have *disproved*.

“ of

“ of JULIUS CÆSAR, in vast Numbers :  
 “ ———Who will not preach any Thing  
 “ they should; who set up Reason  
 “ against Revelation; Man’s Righteous-  
 “ ness in Opposition to CHRIST’S;  
 “ and deny the LORD who bought  
 “ them \*.”

WHERE, Sir, are these Clergymen to be found?—Where does this Clerical Army of Infidels and Hereticks lie in Ambush?—In *Brentford*, or in *Bewdley*?—Or, perhaps, after all, only in some odd Corner of my sincere Friend’s Pericranium †.

BUT

\* *Parochialia*, p. 74.

† ANCIENTS, as well as Moderns, have been subject to Whims and Vagaries. HORACE has given us an Account of a Patient of this Sort. Indeed, the Whim is not the same in both; the Modern fancying he finds an Infidel or Heretick in every Clergyman he meets with, or hears of; but in the Character of both there is a striking Resemblance.

————— *Fuit haud ignobilis Argos, &c.*

HOR. Ep. 2. L. 2.

At



BUT I must now take my Leave of you, for the present, Sir; nor shall I in this Controversy have much Occasion to engage with you personally. You seldom appear in the Field yourself, but leave most of the Conflict to your Auxiliaries. And when you do shew yourself there for a Moment, it cannot be said that you appear to much Advantage. You skirmish indeed for a little while, and then retire hastily, and in no small Confusion, under the Walls and Cannon of your supposed Alliës. To one of these, a late Bishop of *Exeter*, I shall immediately attend:

“ MY Brethren,—I beg you will  
 “ rise up with me against Moral Preach-  
 “ ing.

At ARGOS liv'd a Citizen, well known,  
 Who long *imagin'd*, that he heard the Tone  
 Of deep Tragedians on an empty Stage,  
 And sat applauding in extatic Rage:  
 In *other Points*, a Person who maintain'd  
 A due Decorum, and a Life unstain'd;  
 Whose real Virtue you might well commend,  
*A worthy Neighbour, hospitable Friend,*  
*Of easy Humour, and of Heart sincere.*

FRANCIS.

“ ing. We have long been attempting  
 “ the Reformation of the Nation, by  
 “ Discourses of this Kind.—With  
 “ what Success?—Why, none at all.  
 “ On the contrary, we have dexte-  
 “ rously preached the People into down-  
 “ right Infidelity.—We must change  
 “ our Voice:—We must preach  
 “ CHRIST, and him crucified.—No-  
 “ thing but the Gospel is;—nothing will  
 “ be found to be the Power of GOD unto  
 “ Salvation besides.—Let me there-  
 “ fore again and again request, may I  
 “ not add, let me charge you to preach  
 “ JESUS, and Salvation through his  
 “ Name—preach the LORD who bought  
 “ us—preach Redemption through his  
 “ Blood—preach the Saying of the great  
 “ High Priest, *He who believeth, shall be*  
 “ *saved*—preach Repentance towards  
 “ GOD, and Faith in our LORD JESUS  
 “ CHRIST\*.”

\* *Parochialia.* p. 31.

WHETHER this Extract be faithfully made, without Transpositions or Misquotations, which you yourself are not very nice about; and whether no Explanations, no Softenings are omitted, I cannot say, not having seen this Charge. I shall therefore candidly suppose, that all is fair and accurate; and shall examine it exactly as I find it given in your Letters. Should it, or should it not, prove to be as you imagine, Bishop LAVINGTON's, it signifies little; tho' the Name of Bishop LAVINGTON would more certainly guard his Readers from putting a wrong Construction on his Words; and we shall not hastily suspect, that the famous Author of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, did himself lean towards Methodism. But whoever may claim the Honor of these Words, we must be allowed to say, that the Expressions are very unguarded, and by no Means so accurate as they ought to be. Now, Sir, if I should say, that Faith and Morality are of equal Importance in the Gospel of

CHRIST



CHRIST, I trust, you will not accuse me of under-valuing Faith, and of placing Morality in too high a Rank. If so, considering the strange Propensity, which the World has ever discovered, of extolling Faith in Opposition to Morality, even from the earliest Times (as is sufficiently evident in the remarkable Earnestness of St. JAMES, to reconcile Faith and Works) you will be satisfied, perhaps, that these Expressions of his Lordship, are by no Means unexceptionable; but the surest Way, to convince *you* that they are not, will be to put the following Case:—Suppose then, that as Faith has, at some Times, and by some Persons, been preached upon beyond its due Proportion, his Lordship of *Exeter*, with a View of checking and discountenancing this improper Partiality, had said, “My Brethren, I beg you will  
 “rise up with me against preaching  
 “*Faith*.” Are there not Persons, who, upon hearing such injudicious Language, would not only be astonished, but even in

Agonies.—Rise up with me against preaching *Faith*!—What a Cry would instantly be raised against his Lordship; and Blasphemer, Apostate, Infidel, &c. would be some of the soft Appellations with which he would be honoured. But how comes it to pass, that since Faith and Morality are each of them absolutely and equally necessary to Salvation, (as we have before agreed) we can with perfect Composure, (I might have said with Exultation and Triumph) hear the one disparaged, seemingly disparaged, and when the very same Words are applied to the other, we lose our Temper?—Rise up with me against preaching *Faith*—Injudicious indeed would such Language be, you will most readily allow; and I trust, that you will with no less Readiness allow, that since Faith and Morality are each of them absolutely and equally necessary to our Salvation, his Lordship expressed himself very carelessly, and very improperly, when in his Charge he said, “ I beg you will rise up with  
“ me

“ me against Moral Preaching,” or preaching Morality.—No, my Lord, we will *not* rise up with you against preaching Morality. If we cease to *preach* the Morality of the Gospel, Priests and People will soon cease to *practice* it. We shall soon dexterously preach our Hearers into downright *Iniquity*. Justice, Charity, Piety, Sobriety, Truth, Honesty, each of them an important Branch of Morality, will soon be banished this lower World, and Society will become a *Pandemonium*, a Hell upon Earth. We wish to give that greatest and best Proof of our Love of CHRIST, which he repeatedly and so earnestly called for, when he said, “ If ye love me, keep my Commandments.” What were these Commandments? The Ten Commandments, called the *Moral Law* of MOSES; which Law, CHRIST himself says, he came to fulfil; i. e. to improve, to illustrate, and to explain more fully; and which Law, together with the moral Precepts superadded in



the New Testament, constitutes what is called Gospel, or *Christian Morality*, or those Commandments, the Observance of which CHRIST requires as the Proof of our loving him. We therefore will not rise up with your Lordship against preaching Morality. We do not chuse to be those Fools described by our SAVIOUR as building a House upon the Sand. *Every one that heareth these Sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish Man, who built his House upon the Sand.* What were these Sayings—his *Moral* Sayings? the same Ten Commandments already mentioned, opened and explained in his well-known Sermon on the Mount, in the Conclusion of which are the Words just quoted.

IN the latter Part of this Extract, when his Lordship requests and charges his Clergy to preach JESUS, &c. the Clergy of the Diocese of *Exeter* might then, and may now, and so may the Clergy of every

every Diocese in *England*, reply, with all Humility and Respect—We have anticipated your Lordship: Your Request is complied with before it is made. Your Charge is unnecessary.—We have preached JESUS, and Salvation through his Name—preached the LORD who bought us—preached Redemption thro' his Blood—preached the Saying of the great High Priest, *He who believeth shall be saved*—preached Repentance towards GOD, and Faith in our LORD JESUS CHRIST. We have done all this, my Lord, nay, we have done more: For with respect to that Saying of our great High Priest, “*He who believeth shall be saved,*” knowing how much this, and similar Expressions in the Gospel, have been misapprehended and misapplied, we have been always careful to guard these Passages by suitable Restrictions and Explanations. We have been careful to remind our Hearers, that tho' our great High Priest has said, *He who believeth shall be saved,* he hath also,

also, with equal Plainness, declared,  
 “ *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the*  
 “ *Commandments:*” And that St. PAUL,  
 who says, “ *Believe on the LORD JE-*  
 “ *SUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved,*”  
 says also, “ *Without Holiness,*” (that is,  
 we tell them, without Virtue, a good  
 Life, good Works, Morality) “ *no Man*  
 “ *shall see the LORD.*”

INDEED, Sir, *the World*, and *the Gos-*  
*pel*, will have little Obligation to that  
 Man, who lessens the Importance of *Mo-*  
*rality* in either of them; or who, in  
 speaking of *Faith* and *Morality*, expresses  
 himself carelessly, and runs into Ex-  
 tremes, and represents them like two  
 Masters of different and interfering In-  
 terests, both of whom it were impossible  
 for us to serve at the same Time. His  
 Lordship stood on tender Ground:—  
 Faith and Morality have been much  
 talked of by some Persons, and much  
 misunderstood: It would, therefore, have  
 been more judicious, and more *safe*, to  
 have



have shewn the Nature of both; the absolute Necessity of *both*; and their *intimate Connection* in that Gospel, whose Foundation is Faith, and whose Superstructure is Morality, or good Works.—

When we read these Passages, *Rise up with me against Moral Preaching*—

Preach the Saying of the great High Priest, *He who believeth shall be saved.*

—If we had not been told they were quoted from a Bishop's Charge, we might, very excuseably, have mistaken them for the Language of the Tabernacle, and of Lady HUNTINGDON'S Chapel.

UPON an impartial Review of this whole Passage, *you* will acknowledge the Expressions are very incautious and inaccurate; and I must say, that, considering their delusive Appearance, and that they are cited from the Writings of a Bishop, they were very likely to mislead such Readers as yourself, and the Friend,

to

to whom, you say, you are obliged for the Communication of this Extract\*.

YOUR Quotation immediately succeeding the above, is from the Charge of a very distinguished Character; distinguished by his ecclesiastical Rank, but much more distinguished by his Virtues, his Genius, and his Learning, to whom the poetic HAYLEY has, with much

\* I know not what absurd Charges might not be brought against our Clergy, if a Collection was made of every unguarded and indefensible Expression, which may be found scattered through their Writings. But if a Man of Genius, like Mr. KNOX, or a Dignitary of our Church, should not convey their Sentiments with sufficient Propriety, are we to sacrifice our Reason and common Sense to their Mistakes, and be silent. If they throw Obscurity on the Gospel, or Aspersions on its Teachers, it is our Duty to remove the one, and to wipe off the other. Indeed, this strange Extract from the Bishop of *Exeter* is so loosely worded, as to give no small Countenance to the Nonsense of Methodism. And I can truly say, the Letters of Mr. J. would have passed unnoticed by me, had he not inserted, from some first-rate Characters, certain Passages, which absolutely required a free and impartial Examination.

Propriety,

Propriety, given the Epithet of the  
 "Attic HURD."

— deem infallible no Critic's Word,  
 Not e'en the Dictates of thy Attic HURD,  
*Essay on Epic Poetry, Ep. 1. L. 301.*

" The Topicks and Principles, on  
 " which we form our Discourses, must  
 " be *wholly Christian*. The various Mo-  
 " tives to Virtue, and all Goodness,  
 " which may be drawn from the great  
 " Doctrines of the Christian Revelation,  
 " as they are infinitely more persuasive  
 " and affecting than all others; so they  
 " should be constantly and earnestly im-  
 " pressed on our Hearers. To live as  
 " becometh the Gospel, is the Duty of  
 " Christians; and, therefore, to preach  
 " that Gospel, must be the proper Duty  
 " of Christian Ministers."

YOUR Management of this Quotation,  
 Sir, is truly extraordinary. You have  
 cut out the Remainder of the Paragraph,  
 of which the Words, *wholly Christian*,  
 end the first Sentence; and have, with

H wonder-



wonderful Skill and Dexterity, and without giving your Readers the least Notice, tacked to it an entire new Paragraph, the succeeding one. Nor is this by any Means the most extraordinary Part of your Conduct. Your Ingenuity in omitting the Remainder of the first Paragraph, and that very Passage, which made most for your Cause, is admirable indeed. You may remember, Sir, that in the Beginning of this Letter, I promised to deal with all Fairness, like one who was in Pursuit of Truth, more than of Victory. I shall now give you full Evidence of my Sincerity; and that, when I made such a Declaration, it was not a mere controversial Flourish, designed to conciliate the Affections, and to secure the good Opinion of my Readers. I shall quote the Passage, as given by the Bishop himself; though, I think, that in Appearance, and by Implication, it militates more strongly against me, than any Quotation you have produced.

“ PER-

“ PERMIT me only to say, that your  
 “ Sermons cannot well be too plain;  
 “ and that they ought to be wholly  
 “ Christian\*.”

As inverted Commas are added by his Lordship to these Words, we must suppose them a Quotation from another Writer, tho’ no Name is given in the Margin. After bestowing a few Lines on the first Member of this Sentence, his Lordship proceeds:

“ But further, you will allow me to  
 “ observe, that the Topics and Princi-  
 “ ples, on which we form our Dis-  
 “ courses, must be *wholly Christian*. I  
 “ do not mean to exclude natural Rea-  
 “ son from our public Exhortations, but  
 “ to employ it in giving Force to those  
 “ best and most efficacious Arguments for  
 “ a good Life, which the Gospel sup-  
 “ plies. I would only say, that we are

\* Bishop HURD’s Charge, p. 15.

“ not to preach Morality in Exclusion  
“ of Christianity.”

“ YOUR Sermons ought to be *wholly*  
“ *Christian.*” If, by these Words, it  
is meant, they must contain no Argu-  
ment for a good Life, however effica-  
cious, which is not *peculiar to Christia-*  
*nity*; no Motive, however powerful,  
which *Reason* might dictate, *prior to the*  
*Times of Christianity*, we doubt the Ex-  
cellence of this Rule. “ It would both  
“ be unjust and unwise to reject the  
“ smallest Inducement to any Part of  
“ Goodness; for we greatly need every  
“ one that we can have.\*” We may  
venture to say, then, these Words, *wholly*  
*Christian*, as used in the original Quo-  
tation, are indefensible, if this is the  
Sense: If not the Sense, What is?—  
A Question, perhaps, not easily an-  
swered.

\* SECKER.

HOWE-



HOWEVER, his Lordship, in the Passage which you have so unexpectedly omitted, has given us the Sense in which he himself understands it. As to the Sentence which follows the Words, *wholly Christian*, I am not sure I understand it, and rather suspect that it is not expressed with sufficient Accuracy; but no Matter, the chief Sentence is clear enough, viz. “ *I would only say, that we are not to preach Morality, in Conclusion of Christianity,*” and it comes in as an Explanation of the Words, *wholly Christian*. I believe no Man can read this Explanation of the Words, without finding a Meaning he never expected to find; and a Meaning which the Words, I think, do not contain. Let us, however, try them by a familiar Illustration. Let us suppose his Lordship should be met by a Friend, who tells him, he has Company to dine with him, and wishes the additional Pleasure of his Presence, with the rest of the Party; and in the short Conversation mentions, that the  
 Company

Company will be *wholly Christian*.—— Judge of his Lordship's Surprize, if, after this, he presently finds himself in Company, not only with *Christians*, but with *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Infidels*;—with a learned *Jew* Rabbi;—with the present *Tripoline* Ambassador;—an Abbe RAYNAL, or a GIBBON.——Suppose, too, a convenient Opportunity offering before they part, his Lordship should take his Friend aside, and accost him,—“ My Friend, I am well satisfied with the learned and elegant Conversation of the Company, and am not displeased to meet with Men of Talents and Virtue, tho' they may entertain Opinions respecting Religion very different from my own, and such as I heartily wish they may one Day renounce: I only beg Leave to ask an Explanation of a remarkable Expression you made Use of, and which, indeed, struck me at the Time of Invitation, viz. That the Company should be *wholly Christian*.”——“ Why true, my Lord, I did so; but I  
only

only meant to say, that I should not invite these *Moral Men* in *Exclusion* of *Christians*."—I think his Lordship, and his Friend too, upon recollecting himself, would allow, that, in saying his Company should be *wholly Christian*, he only meant, that *Christians* should not be *excluded*, he certainly expressed himself in a very unusual, and in no very intelligible Manner. This Illustration will fairly, and very exactly, apply to the Words before us; and I think it will be acknowledged, that when his Lordship meant to signify, that we are not to preach *Morality* in *Exclusion* of Christianity, he conveyed that Meaning very obscurely, by saying, our Sermons must be *wholly Christian*.

PERHAPS it may safely be affirmed, that his Lordship was drawn into this Obscurity and Inaccuracy by his Original; without suspecting how indistinct were the Ideas of the first Writer. But it has been attended with other Inconveniences;



veniences ; for tho' the Manner in which his Lordship has expressed himself, may surprize the Reader much ; the Meaning itself will scarcely surprize him less.

WE are not to preach *Morality* in *Exclusion* of Christianity.—It may be asked, Is there any Danger of the Clergy preaching in this Manner ? If no Danger, where is the Necessity of such an Admonition ? If there is a Danger, where are the Proofs, where indeed the Probability ? Have they ever so preached in Times past ? Do they preach so at present ? The Clergy, when they attentively read this Sentence, must consider it with Astonishment. Had his Lordship been told of such an Admonition, delivered to the Clergy of any other Diocese, I am confident, that entertaining no Opinions so disgraceful to us, and forgetting the Inaccuracy of his own Language, he would express his Disapprobation of it, in the most unqualified Terms. As therefore, the Whole  
of

of this implied Censure, arises entirely from incautious and unguarded Expressions, it will be the less necessary to remark, how unsuitable was such an Admonition, on his Lordship's *primary* Visitation of his Clergy; of whom, till Experience forbade, Candour would incline him to think much more highly; an Admonition, which implied either incredible Ignorance, if they did not *know*, that Christian Ministers must not preach Morality in Exclusion of Christianity; or incredible Baseness and Apostacy, if, knowing this, they swerved from, and betrayed that Faith, which they had engaged to maintain. I doubt not his Lordship (if this Letter should have the Honour of his Perusal) will declare, without the least Hesitation, that he has not expressed himself so accurately, as he might have done; that he entertains no such Sentiments of the Clergy; and meant to suggest no such Admonition: an Admonition, which I believe, it never has been necessary; and, which,

I

I trust,

I trust, it never will be necessary, to address to the Clergy of the Church of England.

If I have examined this Passage, from his Lordship's Charge, with much Freedom; as indeed I ought, where Truth, or Religion, or the Character of its Teachers, are concerned; I hope I have also considered it with the same Degree of Respect; which, I am sensible, is equally my Duty. I have declined saying several Things I wished to have said, which, howsoever becoming in many others, might be improper in me: Such is the Lustre of his Lordship's Character, it can receive no Addition from the Pen of CLERICUS.

I am now come to the two last of those Quotations, which I think it necessary to examine. I shall consider them together. They are contained in the Charges of Archbishop SECKER, whom as well as many others, you  
have



have lain under very heavy Contributions. Had you been satisfied with producing fewer Quotations, or had you drawn the most material Passages, into a separate, and a more conspicuous Point of View, weak and bad as your Cause is, it would have made a better Appearance; and your Readers would have been able to form some Opinion (which is probably more than every one now can) how far you had made good those Facts and Positions, which, with such infinite and unnecessary Fatigue, both to yourself and your Readers, you were endeavouring to establish.

“ The Truth, I fear, is,” says SECKER, “ that many, if not most of us, “ have dwelt too little on these Doctrines in our Sermons, by no Means, “ in general, from disbelieving or flighting them.” Again, “ we have in “ Fact, lost many of our People to Sectaries, by *not* preaching in a Manner, “ *sufficiently evangelical.*” In these two

Passages, he evidently means the same Thing: The Doctrines, in the first, are those which are *peculiar to Christianity*, and which, he fears, we have dwelt too little upon in our Sermons; and he expresses the same Idea, in more remarkable Words, when he says, we have in Fact, lost many of our People to Sectaries, by *not* preaching in a Manner, *sufficiently* \* *evangelical*.

You will recollect, Sir, that one of the Charges, you are endeavouring to support against the Clergy, is, that they have *slighted* Revelation itself; and to prove this, you have, with your usual Circumspection, brought a Passage from Archbishop SECKER, expressly declaring, we have *not slighted* Revelation or its Doc-

\* You have given this last Passage, a second Time, and omitted those very strong Words, *We have in Fact, lost many of our People to Sectaries*. Some Opponents would have taken that Ground, which suited themselves best, and which you had left open: But I chuse to contend in the fairest and the most honourable Manner.

trines.

trines. "By no Means, in general, "from disbelieving or \* slighting them." And he immediately subjoins some Reasons, why, he thinks, they may have been dwelt upon too little: The first is, "Partly from knowing, that formerly, "they have been inculcated, *beyond their* "Proportion, and even to the *Disparage-* "ment of Christian Obedience," or *Morality*. This, Sir, is full in Point; and would have been a very handsome Apology, even supposing the Charge of preaching too little on those Doctrines, had been, as SECKER apprehended, *true*. It is impossible to consider SECKER, as of any Service, in supporting your Assertion, that the Clergy are Infidels, and slight Revelation; for the Passage is as direct a Contradiction of your Position, as Words can convey; and yet it con-

\* Again he says, Doctrines which we are *unjustly* accused of casting off and undervaluing, You think the Archbishop forgets himself here. You will find, on reviewing the Passage, that the Mistake is not the Archbishop's, but Mr. JESSE's.

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tains a Charge, or rather expresse a Suspicion, a Fear, of some Defect in our Sermons. It may not then be amiss, considering the Cause I have undertaken, to examine impartially how the Case stands; and whether the Charge is not unfounded, and these Fears groundless.

This candid and worthy Metropolitan, considers the Clergy as firm Believers of that revealed Religion which they preach, and knowing that the two main Principles of that Gospel are the Doctrines peculiar to the Christian *Faith*, and the Precepts of Christian *Morality*, he says, and you shall have it in his own clear Statement; “ The Truth, I fear  
 “ is, that many, if not *most* of us,  
 “ have dwelt too little on these Doc-  
 “ trines in our Sermons.”

I shall first remark, that it is scarce prudent to assert, what, if called upon, there is no *Possibility* of proving. If  
 it

it can be proved that we have dwelt too little on these Doctrines, the Proofs must be drawn either from printed or from Manuscript Sermons. Not from the first, for we have no Complaints of this Sort, against the printed Sermons of the Deceased. The Clergy of the present Times only, like the present Times themselves, are always chiefly complained of. If it is to be proved from the Manuscript Sermons of the Clergy, his Cotemporaries; it may be asked, had his Grace heard all the Sermons of the Clergy, or even a Majority of the Sermons of the Clergy? If he had *not* heard them (which we may safely affirm) had he been favoured by the Majority of the Clergy with an *Inspection* of their Manuscript Sermons? If not (which we may again safely affirm); if he had neither *heard* nor *seen* them, on what good Grounds can he express these Fears? —Is there any other Method of proving the Assertion?—None.—Is there then any Foundation for what has been asserted?

serted? Unquestionably there is no Foundation. His Lordship's Fears, therefore, we may venture to conclude, are groundless. Yet the Charge is no flight one; and, instead of being of such a Nature, as not to admit a Possibility of Proof, it should have been supported by the clearest, the strongest, and the most indisputable Evidence. How shall we account for so strange a Charge from Archbishop SECKER? A Person of great Judgment and Discretion, than whom, few have done more Honour to the Church of *England*, and indeed to the Church of CHRIST, either by their Writings, or by their Lives. How shall we account for this? There is no great Difficulty in accounting for it. Such an unguarded Concession must be added to that Catalogue of Oversights and Mistakes, from which even the best and greatest of Men have not been exempt. — A worthy Man is never lukewarm and indifferent, where the Honor of God, and the Happiness of his Fellow-Creature, are deeply concerned; but often  
disquiets



disquiets himself in vain, and distresses himself, when there is no real Occasion of Distress. And thus the good old Prelate, anxious for a Cause he had much at Heart, and with all the tender Sollicitude of a Parent, alarms himself without Reason, and harbours Fears, which have no Foundation.

BUT if it be said, many Things may be true, which it is impossible to prove, we will try the Cause with you on the Ground of *Probability*. His Grace, all along, considers us as real Believers, real Christians. *It is*, he says, *by no Means from disbelieving, or slighting*. If then the Clergy of the Church of *England* are firm Believers, and place all their own Hopes of Salvation on Faith in CHRIST, and Obedience to his Commands; what Reason can there be for supposing they dwell too little on *either*; and, if on either, why the latter in Preference to the former? Do we ourselves find it more easy to practice than to believe? The *Probability*, therefore, of

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our right Conduct, is evidently in our Favor; and we make our Appeal to Candour and Common Sense.

There remains another Consideration, which must not be omitted. From the slightest Review of the Gospel of Christ, of its main, and more important Articles of Faith, and its Rules for the Conduct of our Lives; I believe it will be found, that such Articles of Faith, as are best suited to public Discussion, are comparatively few; and its *moral Precepts* very numerous. The peculiar and distinguishing Doctrines of Christianity, tho' they may be variously expressed, are such as these: *The Death of Christ; the Promise of Forgiveness, on Repentance; of the Holy Spirit, or God's assisting Grace; and of a future Reward, in Regions of eternal Happiness, &c.*—They certainly are not numerous: But what an infinite Variety of Subjects does the *Morality* of the Gospel supply. If such be the Case, it is plain that *Morality*, if preached only  
in

in its due Proportion, will unavoidably employ so much more of our Sermons, than *Faith*, that it will have the Appearance (and the Appearance only) as if we had indeed dwelt too little on these great Doctrines, or Articles of our Faith: If such be the Case, this Appearance is satisfactorily accounted for: Our supposed Neglect of Faith, and our supposed Partiality to Virtue, are done away; and the Fidelity of our Clergy stands unimpeachable, if not unimpeached.

THE other Passage from SECKER, has also received its Answer already. We have in Fact lost many of our People to Sectaries\*.—Agreed—By what Cause has this Effect been produced?—By *not* preaching in a Manner *sufficiently Evangelical*.—That we deny.—The Existence of such a Cause should first have been proved; and you have seen there is not

\* By Sectaries, Mr. J. thinks the Archbishop means *Methodists*.



sufficient Reason,—there is not any Reason—for thinking such a Cause *does* exist. That we have lost many of our People, is true; but it remains to be proved, that we have lost them by *not* preaching in a Manner *sufficiently Evangelical*\*.

#### HAVING

\* The good old Prelate observed, with Sorrow, that our Religion had not so great and extensive an Influence as he wished; and that we had lost many of our People to Sectaries. The Idea that we had not preached in a Manner sufficiently Evangelical, was the first that suggested itself; yet may it not fairly be reckoned among those Notions, which, when first they present themselves, have a plausible Appearance; but upon Re-consideration, we are ashamed to think that we have suffered ourselves to be imposed upon; and how little they will stand the Test of Examination. Had his Grace bestowed a second Thought on the Subject, he probably would have assigned a different Cause of our People's going astray, such as, *the Love of Novelty, the Love of Nonsense, &c.* And a slight View of the Publications of some of those Preachers who *modestly* think, and call themselves, the only *Evangelical* or *Gospel Preachers*, would have confirmed him in his Opinion. For what must he have thought of such a Passage as the following: [*From Parochialia, p. 26.*] “ Will you, Sir, venture to assert, “ that the Image of the invisible God hath been set “ forth in all his Glory; *that the People have seen his* “ *Glory;*

HAVING examined the only Quotations I mean to take Notice of, let us review

“ *Glory*; and, in Consequence of this, that *universal*  
 “ *Acclamations of Joy and Triumph*,” [Mercy on us, where  
 is the good Gentleman got!] “ are sounding thro’ our  
 “ Land,—of Hallelujah to the Son of DAVID,—of Sal-  
 “ vation to him that sitteth on the Throne,—and to the  
 “ Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to GOD  
 “ by his Blood?” We will contrast this *superb* sublime  
 Passage with one from the Rev. Mr. R. of Birmingham:  
 it may be seen in the Appendix to Mr. JESSE’S Sermon,  
 and affords a good Example of the Bathos, or the  
*Profound in Reasoning*. “ ARGUMENTS and REASONS  
 “ for Sunday Schools,” &c. “ Many are the Disadvan-  
 “ tages which proceed from an Inability to read. They  
 “ who cannot read at all, cannot write, or read writing,  
 “ or keep written Accounts.—They who cannot read,  
 “ cannot search the Scriptures, nor make any Use them-  
 “ selves of any good Book *whatever*.—Nor can they  
 “ teach and hear so well their own Children and Fa-  
 “ milies read.” Mr. R. is deemed, by his numerous Ad-  
 mirers, a great Orator; and is much followed, and other  
 Churches deserted—no wonder—few, if any, of the  
 Clergy in Birmingham, or out of it, can equal this.—  
 Had SECKER recollected some of the Writings of such  
 Gospel Preachers, he would, probably, have altered the  
 last Quotation, which we have been examining; and in-  
 stead of saying, ‘ We have in Fact lost many of our  
 People to Sectaries, by not preaching in a Manner *suffi-*  
*ciently*

review the original Cause, and the present State of the Dispute between us.

THE Passage in your Discourse, which first attracted my Notice, viz. that *Sermons are dwindled away into Moral Essays*, was not very intelligible [and whose Fault was that, Sir?] and it was very liable to be misapprehended. *It looked like a Disparagement of Morality.* The Morality of the Gospel has, from the earliest Times, been often under-valued; and the Gospel of CHRIST much misrepresented. It is at present a favourite Topic, and particularly in our own Neighbourhood, to censure the Clergy, as *preaching Morality*; and yet the Persons, who talk in this Manner, affix no certain clear Meaning to these Words, and are not *sure* whether *Morality* has, or has not, a Connection with, and makes a Part of the Religion of JESUS. The

*'ciently Evangelical;*' the Conclusion of the Sentence would have run thus---' by *not* preaching in a Manner *' sufficiently Nonsensical.'*

*Methodists*



*Methodists* appear, by the careless Manner in which they express themselves, to hold the Doctrine of Faith without Works, or at least to “cast a longing “lingering Look” that Way; and, you will permit me to add, I had several Reasons for thinking Mr. J. himself a *Methodist*. Considering these Things, it *seemed* as if you meant to accuse the Clergy of the great and *enormous Crime* of preaching *Morality*, that is Virtue, a good Life; of inculcating the *Necessity*, and enforcing the Advantages of it; as if you meant to insinuate the well known and beloved Doctrine of Faith without Works. This was the most obvious, the most natural Interpretation.—Yet you do not expect Salvation without Morality or good Works;—but you preach as if you did, and your Hearers so understand you. You know, Sir, there *really have been* such Notions; and supposing none are so absurd as to entertain them now, yet, with the Help of such  
Language

Language as your's, they may soon rise\* again. But, in Truth, Sir, these absurd Errors are not *perfectly* done away. It is our Duty, therefore, to be vigilant; and to eradicate, if we can, what remains. There are Obscurities and Perplexities in the Minds of many, and among the lower Classes of People particularly; and, indeed, in *every* Class, where they are ignorant and inconsiderate, there are Doubts about *Morality*; when they hear or read, that we are *saved by Faith*, and these Words are not fully and clearly explained. But there must be no Doubts on *Morality*; no, not even the Shadow of Doubt on such a Subject as this; a Subject, Sir, which, to the Honour of God, and his Gospel, to the Welfare of Society, and to the Happiness of every Individual, is of such transcendent Importance.

• Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere; cadentque,  
Quæ nunc sunt in honore. HOR.

*Many shall rise, that now forgotten lie ;  
Others, in present Credit, soon shall die.* FRANCIS.

WHENEVER

WHENEVER Mistakes of such Consequence spring up, it is the most prudent Way, and it is unquestionably our Duty to nip them in the Bud: It is our Duty to seize every such Opportunity of reminding our Hearers, and, if necessary, our Readers, how far from difficult or doubtful is the Doctrine of the Gospel on these Points, and that the Whole is comprized in these few plain Words, that,—

*No moral man,—that is, no virtuous Man,—can be saved without Faith, or Belief in Christ;—no Faith, or Belief in Christ, can save us, without Virtue or Morality.*

THIS long has been, this still is, and, I doubt not, ever will be, the Doctrine delivered from the Pulpit and the Press by our Clergy; and our Congregations, instead of being led away with false and groundless Notions of our Ignorance or Insufficiency, and that we are not *Gospel*

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*Preachers;*



*Preachers*, may go on chearfully in their Duty, without these alarming Apprehensions, and may rest assured they are in the right Way;—that our Doctrine is sound;—the Gospel truly preached by us;—Faith and Virtue accurately stated and fully recommended;—and that nothing remains, but for *the Clergy* conscientiously to *practice* what they *preach*; and *the People*, what they *hear*.

I HAVE declared, that I considered you as a Methodist, and consequently, the Doctrine you meant, or at least seemed to inculcate, as methodistical. You will say, What Reason had you to think me so? I will tell you plainly. It is necessary to use plain Language without Circumlocution, both as you are averse to distant Hints and Inuendos; and particularly, as my first Letter was in a great Measure occasioned, by my having conceived this Opinion of you.

First,

First, SIR, before you came into this Neighbourhood, and as soon as the new Rector of Dowles was announced, it was reported Mr. J. was a Methodist: And ever since your Arrival, your Conduct has added such Confirmation to the Report, that you have almost universally been considered in the same Light. No Wonder then, Sir, if I am carried away by the Stream of popular Opinion at last; though, I can assure you, I at first discountenanced a Report, which, I thought, could do you no great Honour; and I represented you to be, what I believed you to be, a worthy conscientious Clergyman, undishonoured by such Weakness; untainted with Enthusiasm.

Secondly. It is known, you frequently preach *extempore*\*: a Practice  
very

\* IN the same Essay of Mr. KNOX, which contains two of your Quotations, are these Words. Perhaps, you may have overlooked, or forgotten them. “ Extemporary Preaching always pleases the Vulgar. — There

very common with the *Methodists*, and very uncommon with the Generality of our Clergy.

Thirdly. THE very *liberal* Manner, in which you deal out your Censures of the Clergy, which, again, is not unlike\* the *Methodists*, and not very like our own Clergy.

Fourthly. FROM the vague, obscure, and unintelligible Manner, in which you

“ are many Reasons to prevent its Reception among  
 “ the *judicious*.—It can seldom be correct or solid. It  
 “ is, indeed, seldom attempted but by the *superficial*.  
 “ The *greatest Divines*, have not been *presumptuous*  
 “ enough, to lay before their Audience, the Effusions  
 “ of the Moment; but have usually bestowed much  
 “ Time and Care, in the Composition of a *single Ser-*  
 “ *mon*.”

\* I must confess, you fall a little short of the ever-memorable Mr. GEORGE WHITFIELD. He says, “ It  
 “ is most notorious, that for the *moralizing Iniquity* of  
 “ the Priests, the Land mourns.” You only say tamely,  
 Sermons are dwindled away into Moral Essays. Vide  
 WHITFIELD’S *Journal*, as quoted in Bishop GIBSON’S  
*Fourth Pastoral Letter*, p. 271.

are



are reported to preach on Faith. I have not taken these Reports from the ignorant only, or from those who are prejudiced against you; but from the Accounts of those, who are well able to judge, and who also are very sensible (as indeed every one is that knows you) of your many amiable Qualities. Common Sense, they say, will not permit us to think, that he *really* means to exclude Morality. The Goodness of his Life too proves he does not. But if a Man's Doctrine and Opinions are to be judged of by his own Words, Faith, according to Mr. J. is every Thing; and Works, or Morality, Nothing:—And so preach the *Methodists*, whatever they may mean.

Lastly. In the Vehemence of your Zeal; in Confidence of your Ability to make Converts; and in the Persuasion, that it is not sufficient to confine your Labours to your own Parish, or even the other Parish *Churches*, you have repeatedly, as I am informed, made your Appearance

pearance at the Head-Quarters of *Methodism*, and preached at Lady HUNTINGDON's Chapel at *Bath*; where, I have the Pleasure to add, you are much admired by those acute and excellent Critics in sound Divinity.

THESE are the Reasons which led me into the Mistake (if indeed it is a Mistake) of thinking you a *Methodist*; but thinking you so, it was my Duty to guard my own Flock at least from those weak and absurd Notions, which are imputed to, if not adopted by, the *Methodists*. This induced me to write my first Letter, as a Caution against Language so ambiguous, and Errors so dangerous; and I expected to bring you either to an open Acknowledgment and Defence of the Doctrine of *Faith* without *Works*, *Religion* without *Virtue*, or, which was much more probable, to an open Disavowal of it, and a Revocation of that Censure of our Clergy implied in your Words,

“ Sermons

“ Sermons are dwindled into Moral Essays.”

BUT, on reading *Parochialia*, I find you on Ground I never expected to find you; and I observe, that your Ideas were totally different from what *they appeared to be*, considering the *supposed* Character of the Preacher, and the *supposed* Doctrines of the *Methodists*: And that, *most certainly*, you did not mean by “ Sermons are dwindled away into *Moral Essays*,” that the Clergy ought not to *preach Morality*, because we are saved by Faith; but you meant, as it *now* appears, that the Clergy *did* preach Morality, and nothing *but Morality*, because they are *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, and deride the Articles of the Christian Faith;—or, to give your own Words, “ Because we “ have slighted Revelation itself, and the “ great Object of Revelation; instead “ of insisting on its Doctrines, have “ *joined the Infidel in deriding them*; and “ have



“ have inculcated the soothing Doctrines  
“ of what is termed *Natural Religion*.”

IF it was highly necessary to clear and explain the Character of our Religion, there are few, I believe, but will think it was also necessary to clear the Character of its Teachers; and this I have done.

You have endeavoured to prove us *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, by producing a Number of Quotations, the most material of which, tho' not all, I have fully and fairly examined. But had the Quotations, Sir, which I have noticed in this Letter, been clear and plain, and strong in your Favour, they would still have been nothing more than the mere gratuitous Assertions (and perhaps the Mistakes) of two or three Writers; and as they would have contained a Charge of a very heinous Nature, and in the highest Degree improbable; no judicious, no impartial Person would condemn us  
without

without *Proof*; but would require Evidence full and satisfactory, in Proportion to the Nature and Improbability of the Allegation brought against us. But your Quotations are neither strong in your Favour, nor even clear and plain; but a Collection of Passages inaccurately expressed, SECKER's excepted, from which nothing can be proved; and the Writers of which, could they be asked,—Did you, in these Passages, mean what Mr. J. has supposed? Are such your Sentiments of the Clergy? would unanimously answer—No.—We entertain no such Sentiments.—Now, Sir, if we add your Extracts, which I have *not* noticed; some of which are from Authors in the Time of the Reformation; Dr. BARNES, for Instance; some from Dr. HODGES, and from DRYDEN; the Charge you seem to fix upon us is clear: How far it is made good; how far we are really guilty; the Clergy, being themselves Parties, ought not to be Judges. We will leave it, then, to the Judgment of an impar-

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tial

tial Public, and the Laity shall decide on these two Questions:—

WHETHER, from what they have heard, and read, and observed of us, the Clergy, as a Body, have, from the Time of HENRY \* VIII. to the present Period, slighted Revelation itself, and the great Object of Revelation, and joined the Infidel in deriding its Doctrines, even in the Pulpit?—or—

\* SHOULD it be said, the Passage from Dr. BARNES precedes your two-fold Charge; and therefore does not apply;---it shall be allowed. But your two first Quotations, immediately following the above Charge, are from those *approved* Authors, Dr. HODGES and DRYDEN; so that it is impossible to date the Rise of our *Infidelity* and *Heresy* at a later Period than the last Century. Indeed, you have not determined the precise Time when the Clergy *first* began to *join the Infidel* in deriding Christianity. But, as Dr. BARNES is quoted in the next Sentence [p. 12.] why may we not fix on the Time of HENRY VIII. though it is scarcely worth disputing about a Hundred Years, since what you assert has been equally true, and equally notorious, from the first Introduction of Christianity to the present Moment.

WHETHER



WHETHER the judicious, the candid, the cautious Mr. JESSE — is mistaken?

THE Questions are fairly stated, and I am in no Pain about the Answer.

AND now Sir, I suppose, you begin to consider how you shall extricate yourself from the Difficulties with which you are surrounded, and remove the Disgrace, which you have so heedlessly incurred. You have, indeed, much Reason to be dissatisfied with yourself. — Perhaps you may feel disposed, as you do at Times, you say, to run your Head against the Wall of your Church\*.

\* “ IN View of what I ought to be and do, I could “ run my Head against the Wall of my Church.” — Vide *Parochialia*, p. 134.

IF such religious Freaks as these constitute a *Gospeller*, I must confess, Sir, that I neither am, nor am I likely to become, in your Sense of the Word, a *true Gospel Preacher*. — I have always conceived, that the Design of the *Gospel* was to make us *happy* — not to drive us *mad*.

But, I think, I can prescribe for you something better ; something much more consonant with true Religion, with sound Sense, and sober Reason. It is this ;—to acknowledge your Mistakes fairly and ingenuously, and to make a handsome Apology to your Brethren, the Clergy, and to your Readers ; for having misled the one, and so grossly misrepresented the other.—It will be to no Purpose, Sir, to say you did not *mean* to accuse us of so heinous a Crime, as *Infidelity* and *Heresy*, and of *deriding the Faith we preach* ; you must prove that you have *not* accused us ; that your two Assertions, compared with the Rest of *your Book*, bear a different Construction ; and that this is not the general Tenor of your Letters, the pervading and predominating Idea : But this, Sir, you will find impossible. — It will be to no Purpose to say among your Friends, that CLERICUS has misrepresented you, for (considering that some Misapprehensions are unavoidable in reading Authors, especially, such  
obscure

obscure and difficult Authors as yourself) there will be found no Signs of *wilful* Misrepresentation. It will be to no Purpose to say you have expressed yourself *carelessly*, for in such Cases as yours, where a Man is called upon to explain \* a former Charge, such Excuses will not be allowed; it will be no Alleviation, but an Aggravation of your Fault. If you say, your Accusation is not general, you do not mean the Generality of the Clergy, but only that *some* of them are Infidels, Hereticks, &c. Why then, Sir, does your Charge run in general Terms? Your two Assertions are, *we* have slighted Revelation itself, &c. No general Charge can be stronger; it is a Mode of Speech always understood to imply the Generality. Your Charge is stated with all due Solemnity,

\* To be sure, it is much to a Man's Honour to be obliged to write a second Publication to explain his first; and a third to explain his second; and so on, *ad infinitum*.



in the Beginning of your second Letter; here we naturally expect the utmost Accuracy and Precision; here we look for your true Meaning and Sentiments. And if there are a few Passages of a different Nature, such accidental Passages, so inconsistent with the general Tenor of the Whole, and so contrary to your own State of the Question, (particularly the Conclusion of your \* fourth Letter) are inexpressibly ridiculous, and of no Weight in Opposition to your Assertions, so formally urged against us. Still, Sir, I do not say your Letters are *calculated* to *misrepresent*: You had no such Intention. This was not your *Design*, but this will, inevitably, be the Effect. In short, Sir, you must be classed among those, who do not always know what they say or write, or what they *have written*. You

\* SUPPOSE Mr. J. had said " We" (the Clergy) " are Drunkards:" How *childish* would it be to add, " I do not mean or wish that any of the Clergy should " wear this Cap, but they only whom it may entirely " suit."

have

have *without Design* poisoned the Minds of your Readers ; and it is the Wish of CLERICUS, and the Duty of us all, to administer, if we can, a proper and effectual Antidote.

HAD your Mistakes been only common Mistakes, such as all are liable to, after the strictest Care ; had they been *more than common*, if neither Truth, nor Religion, nor its Teachers, were injured, it would have been unhandsome and uncandid to take Notice of them in a worthy well-meaning Man :——The Virtues of his Heart would have been a sufficient Apology for the Mistakes of his Head. But when this worthy well-meaning Man forgets himself, and, blind to his *own* numerous *Faults*, in Preaching and in Writing, officiously engages in depreciating his Brethren ; brings a Charge against them of the most heinous Nature, an unfounded Charge too ; and imputes to them *Faults*, which are altogether *imaginary* ; there can be nothing improper,

per, nothing unchristian, in pointing out the Errors of such a Man; and in examining the Competency of *his Judgment*, who is become the self-constituted Censor of the Clergy. And yet, Sir, if your Publication contains not a *Super-abundance* of Mistakes and Inaccuracies; if it is not *remarkably* deficient in every Thing essential to a *useful* and *instructive* Composition; if it does not exhibit an *extraordinary* Specimen of a *confused* Way of *thinking* and *writing*; I will still admit you have Reason to complain. But, if it does, you, Mr. J. who first drew our Attention to your own Compositions, by expressing yourself dissatisfied with those of the Clergy, can, I think, with no Propriety complain. And if there are in this Letter, no wilful Misrepresentations of your Words, but the Sense I have given, and understood you in, is the true obvious Sense, in all fair and equitable Construction; it will scarce be proper to say, that



that CLERICUS has exposed Mr. JESSE.—  
Mr. JESSE has exposed himself.

You, somewhere in *Parochialia*, tell me, you forgive my first Letter.—*Forgiveness from Mr. JESSE!*—I ask, I require, no Forgiveness, where I have done no Injury. The Injury has been done by *you* \*. Mr. J. first made his Charity Sermon an Occasion of pronouncing a most uncharitable Censure on his Brethren. He was desired to be more explicit; and he then writes, or

\* THAT you *thought* yourself injured by my first Letter, I doubt not; that you forgave me the supposed Injury, I doubt as little. I feel no particular Injury from you: If I did, I am sure I could forgive any Thing from so worthy a Man; nay more—the greatest Injury, which even the worst of Men could do me; so conscious am I of that Forgiveness, of which I myself stand in Need.

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rather compiles, a Book of 227 Pages, and heaps Quotation on Quotation, to prove, that the Clergy are *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, and *Deriders of the Christian Faith*.—But who requires Forgiveness in this Case, the Defender of the Injured, or the false Accuser? How long, Sir, has it been right to impute imaginary Faults, and wrong to correct real ones? How long has it been honourable to misrepresent, and dishonourable to rectify those Misrepresentations? How long has it been commendable to propagate Errors, and blameable to confute them? How long has the Defence of a Body of Men (including Self-Defence) been a Crime, and Calumny a Virtue?—The Charge brought by CLERICUS, and supported by no slender Proof, amounts to a Mistake of the Head; but Mr. J. accuses

cuses the Clergy of a *Crime*, and such a Crime, as scarcely admits a Possibility of Proof. The one alledges against him, a Confusion of Ideas (no *Crime*, it is to be hoped) and Want of Judgment in a *single Individual* only; the other imputes to a *whole Body of Men*, and those the Teachers of Religion,—*Depravity*, enormous *Depravity of Heart*.—Then which of us, Sir, requires Forgiveness? —Yet CLERICUS has written “an unbecoming Letter in a bad Spirit.” It may be added, In what Spirit are Mr. JESSE’s Letters written?—CLERICUS spoke of your Mistakes, your Misapprehension, your Thoughtlessness; and it shewed some Temper, to avoid a harsher Term. But when Mr. J. mentions the Clergy, he alledges against them, in Language equally polite and candid,



“ The Rottenness of their Hearts\*.”—

It is pretty clear, then, on which Side the Candour lies;—that there is a great *Mistake somewhere*, is equally clear;—that there is a *bad Spirit* on *either Side*, is what I shall not easily believe.

I heartily wish, that you may not again stand so much in Need of Forgiveness from your Brethren, as you certainly do at present; and, I hope, that, for your own Credit, you will be more cautious in advancing such Assertions, as we find in *Parochialia*;—that the Clergy are Infidels and Hereticks; and even in the Pulpit have joined the Infidel in deriding the Faith they preach; since the slightest Examination, like the Touch of ITHU-

\* *Parochialia*, p. 18.

RIEL'S\* Spear, will prove their Falshood; and every *Sunday* bring to every Congregation, a fatisfactory, an unanswerable Confutation of this groundless Charge.

It has been said, ' We may love the Man, and hate his Vices.' How far all is found here, I shall not examine. But as Errors and Vices have a different Source, often as different as the Head and the Heart, it might, perhaps, more safely be asserted, that we may love the Man, and hate his Mistakes. The Mistakes of the Head, therefore, need not exclude all Friendship. In Friendship there certainly are Degrees; as it implies only a high Opinion of another's Heart, the utmost good Will towards him, and every

\* MILTON, b. 4, l. 810.

94 A D E F E N C E

Sentiment, which Christian Charity can  
inspire. In this qualified Sense, I do,  
with great Truth, subscribe myself,

REVEREND SIR,

Your sincere Friend,

And humble Servant,

CLERICUS.

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